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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: CODEL BOEHNER DISCUSSES CN AND CORRUPTION WITH
HELMAND GOVERNOR MANGAL

REF: KABUL 389

Classified By: PRT Director Valerie Fowler for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

[¶1.](#) (C) House Republican Leader John Boehner and five other members of Congress visited Camp Bastion in Helmand Province on February 8, and were briefed on provincial developments by Helmand Governor, UK Senior Civilian Advisor Hugh Powell and members of Task Force Helmand, and Poppy Eradication Force (PEF) advisor (State/INL) Mick Hogan. Governor Mangal described his Food Zone program, explained the connection between drug production and corruption in the province, and asked the delegation to push Kabul to curb corruption.

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[¶2.](#) (C) The Governor described this year's Food Zone program as a strong effort by the U.S., UK and his team to move farmers away from poppy cultivation back into wheat production, and thanked all for their support. He emphasized the battle against drug production would require sustained support for alternative livelihood programs and the eradication effort already underway in Helmand. Mangal noted that the large scale drug production contributed directly to the wide spread corruption across Helmand and added that he had removed several local and provincial officials but needed political support from the U.S. to achieve further success. Mangal stressed that "the fight against corruption must start at the top, and in the central government a real effort must be made to move against corruption." He asked the delegation to use their political connections to help fight against corruption and to encourage Kabul to do more.

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[¶3.](#) (C) The CODEL asked for an update on Voter Registration (VR) and what the national elections might look like in the South and Helmand. The PRT reported that VR was going very well due to Mangal's energetic public efforts to promote the process and coordinate security. On national elections the PRT agreed that the Helmand population was disillusioned with Karzai and that most Helmandis had no intention of voting for him, but this also meant most Helmandis would not vote because few would support a Tajik or Hazara candidate. None of the potential national candidates have any following in Helmand and it is unclear if any of them can build support among the population.

[¶4.](#) (C) The CODEL requested an update on eradication but was

also interested in the drug treatment capacity provided by the internationals and GIROA. Mick Hogan delivered a detailed update of the current eradication effort and gave good credit to the UK for their support this year. The PRT stated that drug addiction in Helmand is a growing problem, and the UK already has a drug treatment facility in operation. However, more resources and a greater effort are needed to deal with drug problem within the population and security forces. The PRT said that police candidates are drug tested before training at the Regional Training Centers and testing results verified high drug usage among the Helmand youth, reinforcing that greater treatment capacity is needed to address the growing problem.

15. (C) The CODEL said they were informed that corruption in GIROA was very bad and asked if this was the case in Helmand.

The PRT explained that drugs produce enormous amounts of revenue throughout Helmand and this undoubtedly creates an environment where corruption of local officials thrives. The PRT also noted that drug revenue is connected to several well-placed officials in Kabul and this may contribute to the ongoing instability in the Nad Ali District of Helmand. These officials retain links to the drug industry and they stand to profit from the continued opium production based in Helmand. Mangal's removal of several corrupt provincial and district officers was an important first step, but without solid support from Kabul his efforts alone will not be able to tackle the entrenched Helmand corruption problem.

16. (U) The CODEL did not have an opportunity to clear this cable.
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